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30 October 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM:

[REDACTED]
Director of Soviet Analysis

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SUBJECT: Senate Testimony on Soviet Air Defenses,
28 October 1981

1. For your background, the CIA testimony to the Stevens Committee and the agreed Community positions upon which it is based are attached. It might be of some help to recap the procedures and to summarize the key points we were trying to make in the question and answer period. [REDACTED]

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2. The formal statement and the vugraphs used with it comprise the standard NIE 11-3/8-80 overview that has been given repeatedly in the last several months. At the end of that statement, Senator Stevens turned directly to the B-1 issue and pressed us for our views on the effectiveness of the aircraft. We limited our responses to the judgments made in the national estimates. Briefly summarized, we argued:

- a. The current Soviet air defenses were of limited effectiveness against targets at low altitude because of the gaps in ground based radar coverage, lack of an operational AWACS and limited deployment of systems with look-down, shoot-down capabilities. [REDACTED]
- b. The radar cross sections of both the B-52 and the B-1 are sufficiently large to be seen by Soviet air defense radars if either aircraft flew within the coverage area of the radars. [REDACTED]
- c. The deployment of the Soviet AWACS is an important development as it would provide continuous radar coverage over an increasingly large area as the system proliferated in the 1980s. [REDACTED]

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d. But by either the CIA or DIA forecasts, the numbers of AWACS deployed by the end of the decade would still cover only a small portion of Soviet territory. For example, the critical attack routes in the northwest USSR might be covered but much of the rest of the country would still have gaps in the radar coverage. [REDACTED]

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c. Apart from this radar acquisition problem where both B-52 and B-1 faced a similar situation, the B-1 had some advantages. It is faster at low altitude and would thus pass through engagement zones more quickly, improving its survivability.

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[REDACTED]
although CIA had no way of assessing how much better--the Air Force would have to answer that.

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f. Finally, all the above statements assume an un-degraded Soviet air defense system when, in fact, SAC will use defense suppression attacks. Here again, CIA has no basis for assessing the difference in effectiveness between the B-52 and the B-1 and the Air Force would have to provide that judgment. [REDACTED]

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3. The CIA briefers avoided statements that would endorse either procurement of B-1, delay of B-1 procurement, or direct procurement of a stealth bomber, skipping B-1 procurement. [REDACTED]

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Attachments:
As stated

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